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Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Grizzlies romp past Simon Fraser 45-17 in season finale" (1976). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 27783.
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GRIZZLIES ROMP PAST SIMON FRASER
45-17 IN SEASON FINALE

rosenthal/ld
11-22-76
sports state + big sky + football +



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MISSOULA--

The Montana Grizzlies closed out the 1976 football season with a 45-17 win over Simon Fraser of Burnaby, British Columbia, this past Saturday. The 28 point difference was the widest of the season for any game Montana has played. The largest winning margin had been 4 points and the widest losing margin had been 9, previous to the Simon Fraser game.

The Grizzlies ended the season 4-6 overall and 3-3 in the Big Sky Conference, good for fourth place.

The game was the finale for 14 Montana seniors and the 1976 contingent went out with a bang. All-American Candidate, Greg Anderson, returned the opening kickoff 91-yards for a touchdown, his first touchdown return since 1974. Bruce Carlson's PAT made it 7-0 with 16 seconds gone in the game. Carlson added a 25-yard field goal a little later to make it 10-0. Then the Clansmen struck back and knotted up the score at 10-10 before senior Paul Fiskness scored from 11-yards out on what coach Gene Carlson described as "a gutsy, superb run." The PAT by Bruce Carlson made it 17-10 and UM never relinquished the lead.

Senior halfback Del Spear got into the scoring act, with two touchdown runs in the third quarter. Spear rambled in from the 3 and the 52-yard line. Two more PAT kicks hiked the score up to 31-17. The Clansmen came back with a score when quarterback Dale McRoberts brought it in from the 1-yard line. The final two tallies came from senior fullback Mike Mickey of Montana. Mickey scored on runs of 36-yards and 13-yards. Bruce Carlson got the first PAT kick and brother Jeff converted the second to make the final score 45-17.

"It was a very gratifying win," Montana coach Gene Carlson said. "We wanted to close out the season with a win, especially after Simon Fraser had embarrassed us the past two seasons, winning 24-10 last year and 23-14 in 1974."

Carlson had praise for his entire squad, particularly the seniors who played so well. "I was really elated to see Greg Anderson, Del Spear and Mike Mickey play so well. Greg's touchdown and interception were typical of what he's done all season and throughout his career. Even with a broken hand, he played like an All-American." Anderson broke his hand in the UM-Idaho game the week before.

Spear has been hampered by a pulled hamstring this season and has not been at full strength in recent weeks. The career touchdown leader got his first and second tally of the season in the third quarter, to raise his school leading total to 21 touchdowns. Mickey has seen limited action this season but broke loose for 74-yards and 2 touchdowns on just 4 carries. Senior running backs Rich Jordan and Paul Fiskness also had good days in their last appearance. Jordan had a 29-yard touchdown run called back because of a holding penalty and Fiskness scored on an 11-yard scamper.

Although the passing game was off the mark, the running game was strong and well-balanced. "Mike Wagner didn't have a good passing day but did read the option well," commented Carlson. The Grizzlies rolled up 321-yards on the ground but only picked up 29-yards passing.

Carlson also had praise for many of his younger players who saw valuable playing time in the second half. Carlson said many of the freshmen and sophmores who saw limited action in the Simon Fraser game will be major contributors to the UM program next season.

Reserve quarterback Pat Sullivan saw his first collegiate playing time late in the game. Running backs Wayne Harper and Greg Bitar, receivers Jim Brant and Gelaskoska and defensive players Robbie Dews, Sam Martin and Matt VanWormer all figure into future plans. Freshmen Greg Dunn, Scott Ferda, Guy Bingham and Allan Green have seen playing time throughout the season.

In retrospect, Carlson views the 1976 season with some disappointment but also sees some very positive aspects. "I felt we played very well in our conference games but didn't take advantage of opportunities. Our games against Montana State and Idaho were good examples of that. We felt that all of our games this season could have gone either way, but our inconsistency, offensive mistakes and injuries hurt us."

Carlson did see some bright spots through the season. "We have some excellent young players," says Carlson "and they are showing great promise. Our defensive secondary matured a great deal during the season, but we're going to have to have a good recruiting season to replace some of our seniors."

Carlson said that linemen and linebackers are top priority on the recruiting list.

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